

LEADERSHIP STYLES FOR THE FIVE STAGES OF RADICAL CHANGE

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Leadership experts agree that a key challenge facing leaders now and in the future is responsiveness to radical change. This article continues prior work on radical change with theory and research on leadership style. The result is a model of radical change describing the leadership styles best suited to the successful implementation of each stage in the change process. Using the Leadership Style Inventory, leaders can determine which stages of radical change they are equipped to handle. The article explores how individual and group leadership style limitations can be dealt with to ensure radical change success.

The key component of successful leadership now and in the next century is proactive and effective responsiveness to change. Experts agree that successful leaders must be flexible and capable of adapting to new conditions, open to novel alternatives, and willing to take greater risks (Kotter, 1990; O'Toole, 1996). Too often leaders and managers address technical dimensions of change but fail to consider what it takes at each stage for leaders to actually carry out that change (Heifetz and Laurie, 1997a; Rowe and Mason, 1987; Rowe and Boulgarides, 1992).

Leaders who can do these things are referred to as Strategic Leaders (Reardon and Rowe, 1998). Such leaders recognize that most work now involves integration

rather than fractionation of diverse interests and skills. Multiple styles of leadership are needed to effectively implement most forms of organizational change. Strategic leaders accept that they cannot have all the answers and they take steps to obtain information that effectively guides their choices. These leaders rely heavily on communication and persuasion with employees to advance their enlightened strategies. When compared to popular models of leaders of the past, strategic leaders are far more inclined to be information seekers than information distributors.

Figure 1 depicts the models of leadership from the early 1900s to today. In the 1900s, leadership was equated with those individuals who did "great" things. These

leaders had a “can do” attitude based on experience and determination. They used their authority to “command” others. By the 1950s, attention shifted to determining leader traits and how they fit the situations in which they function. In the early eighties, another change took place. This time the emphasis was on the “visionary” leader. These leaders inspired others with insights and shared authority. Today’s leaders, confronted with explosive change, need to be “strategic leaders”: sufficiently versatile to recognize the need for change, to seek input for developing creative strategies for change, and to inspire others to adopt those strategies.

According to Max DePree, author of *Leadership Is an Art*, leaders are vulnerable in their day-to-day-jobs. This vulnerability of leaders is currently exacerbated by the information superhighway affording access to extraordinary amounts of in-

formation. Leaders are confronted with far too many choices, as predicted by Alvin Toffler’s 1980 forecast. He warned that this would inhibit action, result in greater anxiety and lead to feelings of exhaustion. Today’s leaders also work with employees who are more diverse than those of their predecessors and customers and subsidiaries spread worldwide. Under such conditions, no single leader can possibly have all the answers or all of the styles required to accomplish the myriad tasks confronting him or her each day.

To effectively respond to the current chaotic environment, leaders must recognize their own strengths and weaknesses. They must understand the extent to which their leadership styles are suited to the demands they face and consider the types of people they need at their side to complement their styles. This is particularly important when organizations undergo

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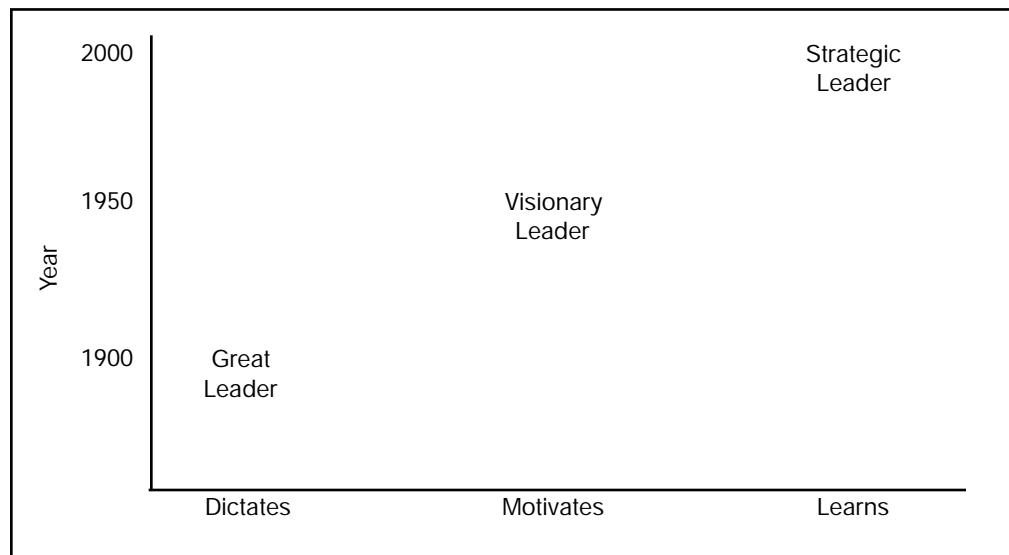


Figure 1. Models of Leadership

radical change. This article addresses the styles of leadership needed to accomplish organizational change and addresses the question: Can any single leader possess the styles needed to lead at every point in the change process?

EXPLANATION OF LEADERSHIP STYLES

The leadership styles shown in Figure 2 were derived from work on the Leadership Style Inventory (LSI) developed by Rowe, Reardon, and Bennis (1995). The inventory identifies differences in style used by leaders that are based on the following two questions: How adaptive are leaders when dealing with the issues they face? How do leaders communicate with, persuade, and energize employees in the process of change?

The LSI identifies four basic styles: commanding, logical, inspirational, and supportive. One of its major strengths is

that it also describes combinations of the basic styles called “patterns.” These patterns help to describe the complexity behind leader behavior and competence for radical change.

The *commanding* style focuses on performance and has a short-term goal orientation. Commanders are highly productive and results oriented. They can be very effective when goal achievement is the primary focus. They learn better by their own successes and failures than by input from others.

The *logical* style pertains to leaders who insist on covering all alternatives. They have long-term goals, use analysis and questioning, and learn by reasoning things through. They are particularly effective when the goal is strategy development.

The *inspirational* style is characteristic of those who are able to develop meaningful visions of the future by focusing on radically new ideas; they learn

Leader style	Focuses on	Persuades by	Makes changes	Learns by
Commanding	Results	Directing	Rapidly	Doing
Logical	Innovation	Explaining	Carefully	Studying
Inspirational	Opportunities	Creating trust	Radically	Questioning
Supportive	Facilitating work	Involvement	Slowly	Listening

Figure 2. Leadership Styles (LSI)

by experimentation. They show a high level of concern for assuring cohesiveness of members of the organization and encouraging others to follow the vision. They are inquisitive, curious, and satisfied by finding radically new solutions.

Those leaders who are more concerned with consensus score high in the *supportive* dimension. They emphasize openness and operate more as facilitators than directors. They learn by observing outcomes and how others react to their decisions.

Most leaders do not possess a single style, but a combination. These combinations indicate which styles leaders are predisposed to use. Inventory scores indicate leader style predispositions.¹ A summary of how each style influences behavior in critical areas of leadership is discussed in Figure 2 (Rowe, Reardon, and Bennis, 1995).

American business executives tend to score high on the commanding style and low on supportive. Research using the LSI provides the following means for American executives: commanding, 86; logical,

80; inspirational, 81; supportive, 53. The means provide an indication of style predispositions. Style patterns, however, are not necessarily static. It is possible, even preferable, for leaders to develop the capacity to adapt their styles to the demands of situations, especially when their organizations are undergoing radical change.

A CASE FOR LEADER VERSATILITY IN THE CHANGE PROCESS

The strongest case for versatility in leadership style comes from the recognition that change is not an event but an extended process. Each stage of that process benefits from different leadership orientations. Strategy researchers have proposed that change involves at least three stages: initiation, formulation, and implementation (Webb and Dawson, 1991; Pettigrew, 1987; Child and Smith, 1987, Rajagopalan and Spreitzer, 1994. Another model (Rowe and Mann, 1988) proposed four factors in the change process: Decision maker's

¹ LSI scores are derived by adding down the four columns of the inventory. The four derived scores (one for each style) total 300. Means are based on the inventories of hundreds of American executives in the Marshall School executive MBA program and those in businesses with which we've consulted.

style, organizational culture, employees' willingness to change, and acceptance of change based on a match among values, culture, and decision style.

John Kotter (1990) proposed that leading change requires: establishing direction, aligning people, and motivating and inspiring. Our model, depicted in Figure 3, draws upon Kotter's model but adds two stages described by Kotter but not specifically stated in his model: launching and maintaining.

While Kotter implies the existence of launching in the aligning stage of his model, we propose that separating it out is imperative to understanding the processes involved in radical change, especially that of leadership. Small or incremental changes often do not require a formal launch. They can be introduced in small doses with change hardly being noticed. Radical change, however, demands that people depart drastically from the *status quo* and often that they do so in a limited period of time. Launching takes the place of introducing change in dribs and drabs.

Our reasons for clearly articulating the existence of a maintenance phase comes from persuasion theory and practice. People resist change, especially radical change. Persuasion research indicates that choosing to comply, rather than being forced into it, leads to longer adherence to change. Radical change requires more than mere compliance. It requires private acceptance. This occurs when employees actually believe in the need for change and are therefore willing to relinquish old modes of working in favor of long-term new ones.

Achieving private acceptance is an across-phase process from planning the

change through to maintaining it. Overlooking the maintenance phase is a significant oversight in any model of change. Private acceptance doesn't assure that a change will endure; it merely sets the stage for that result. Employees must be encouraged to continue the change even in the face of occasional obstacles. We emphasize maintenance, especially in a model of radical change, since perceived failures can send employees rushing back to prior, once-mastered ways of doing things.

The primary impetus for this paper is not so much to expand upon prior models of change, but to emphasize and develop an understanding of the role that the leadership style plays at every stage of that process. Leadership style and organizational change

theory and research have existed for decades, but have rarely con-

joined. "People resist change, especially radical change."

joined. The concept of the leader being suited to the task is found throughout leadership literature as far back as Plato. He argued that while it's appropriate to turn to a physician to solve medical problems, a philosopher-king is needed to resolve problems of public policy. Heifetz (1994) suggests that the same is true today within organizations. For what Heifetz describes as adaptive change, "authority must look beyond authoritative solutions" (p. 87). To do this requires flexibility in style within the organization. Launching radical change, for example, is a substantially different process than maintaining it. As such it requires a different leadership style orientation.

To date, researchers and leadership experts have discussed the need for

leadership style flexibility in substantive change efforts, but they have not attempted to conjoin radical change phases with knowledge about leadership style. The linkages between change stages and leadership style types constitutes the breaking of new ground. The model is grounded in our study of leadership style and of organizations undergoing change efforts, several examples of which we share in later descriptions of each radical change phase.

As indicated in Figure 3, we propose that radical change requires considerable reliance on the inspirational style. It is

imperative to four of the five stages of change. Unlike incremental change, radical change requires that leaders think creatively and take risks. These are the hallmarks of the inspirational style. There is no blueprint to follow in radical change. It is both new and a significant departure from prior modes of operating. To overcome the resistance to radical change described earlier, inspirational leaders are needed throughout the change process. In the planning phase, they provide creative input. They empower and involve followers in the enabling phase, inspire and energize them to adopt the change after it

Phase	Focuses	Style
Planning	Acquire information Creative ideas Strategy formulation	Logical/inspirational Inspirational Logical
Enabling	Explaining plan Convincing employees Empowering/involving Assisting	Logical Logical Inspirational/supportive Supportive
Launching	Implementing steps Meeting goals Getting results Assessing progress	Logical Commanding Commanding Logical
Catalyzing	Inspiring Energizing Assisting	Inspirational Inspirational Supportive
Maintaining	Overseeing progress Guiding Energizing Assisting	Logical Inspirational Inspirational Supportive

Figure 3. Senior Manager Leadership Styles for the Five Phases of Radical Change

has been launched and to maintain it despite obstacles. This is reminiscent of the description Hammer and Champy (1993) provide of the reengineering leader (p. 103):

The leader's primary role is to act as a visionary and motivator. By fashioning and articulating a vision of the kind of organization that he or she wants to create, the leader invests everyone in the company with a purpose and a sense of mission. The leader must make clear to everyone that reengineering involves a serious effort that will be seen through to its end. From the leader's convictions and enthusiasm, the organization derives the spiritual energy that it needs to embark on a voyage into the unknown.

But inspirational leadership alone is not sufficient. Hammer and Champy agree here as well. "Urging people isn't enough," they argue. People react warily and cynically to executives insisting that the rules be broken and prior wisdom be defied unless a support system is in place so they can do these things. As Figure 3 depicts, radical change also requires the presence of logicals, supportives, and commander types—but not always working together at each point in the change process. Unlike the inspirational leader, who encourages the risks involved in radical change, logicals, supportives and to some extent commanders are need to provide a support system that enables everyone to go against the grain and stay there for the long-term.

Figure 3 was developed as a blueprint for assigning the most effective leader

types to each phase of radical change, which we'll now discuss.

PLANNING

This stage involves charting the course for change. Here the emphasis is on

creativity, garnering important information, identifying obstacles, considering alternatives, and selecting among them. As shown in Figure 3, the

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leadership styles best suited to this are the logical and the inspirational. The logical leader constantly seeks new information, identifies obstacles, generates alternatives, and considers pros and cons in the final selection. Inspirationalists contribute to this process by encouraging employee input in the search for creative plans

To encourage people to provide information, Stanley Gault, CEO of Goodyear, decided to refer to all employees as "associates." It opened up lines of communication. Jack Welch, CEO of General Electric, attributes part of his success to opening up channels of communication with employees. "To create change, direct, personal, two-way communication is what seems to make the difference: exposing people to ideas from everywhere, judging ideas on their merits" (Tichy and Sherman, 1993).

Mort Myerson (1996), Chairman and CEO of Perot Systems, makes it clear to people that there are a whole lot of things he can't do. When they come to him looking for "the plan," he tells them he doesn't know the plan. "We're either going to figure out the company's future together or

we're not going to do it at all" (*Fast Company*, p. 10).

Myerson's approach fits the radical change model information gathering, employee involvement approach. Planning requires a learning approach to change. You can't empower people if you think you have all the answers. Mort Meyerson says he learned about leadership by opening himself up to doing so. "I told myself I was having the same experience as a caterpillar entering a cocoon.

"The enabling stage not only prepares people for change, but also provides an opportunity for leaders to frame that change."

The caterpillar doesn't know that he'll come out as a butterfly. All he knows is that he's alone, it's dark, and it's a little scary." He realized while in

that cocoon, "I don't have to have all the customer contacts. I don't have to make all the decisions. In fact, in the new world of business, it can't be me, it shouldn't be me, and my job is to prevent it from being me" (*Fast Company*, p. 10).

Research indicates that executives who spend long periods of time in the same jobs or industries develop limited perspectives. Their knowledge base is limited and so is their desire to expand upon it (Cyert and March, 1963; Tushman and Romanelli, 1985; Miller, 1991, Rajagopalan and Deepak, 1995). Their thinking becomes rigid, which in turn limits the strategies from which they might choose. The lesson here: If you're going to stay in a job for a long time, keep the information flowing.

ENABLING

The focus in this phase is on explaining the plan to those who will be involved

in the change effort, and convincing them that the direction chosen is not only best, but one that depends on their contributions. In this stage, enabling or empowering employees provides needed assistance in preparing to launch the change process.

The enabling stage not only prepares people for change, but also provides an opportunity for leaders to frame that change. Frames are schemata used to interpret events (Goffman, 1974). They can assist leaders in explaining to others how change efforts should be interpreted. Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) argue that "We assume a leadership role, indeed we become leaders, through our ability to decipher and communicate meaning out of complex and confusing situations" (p. 2). The way a leader frames a planned change influences whether potential followers see only constraints and roadblocks or opportunities and potential success.

This framing ability is at the heart of the distinction leadership expert Abraham Zaleznik (1977) made between managers and leaders. The former pay attention to how things are done, the latter pay attention to what events and decisions mean. Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus (1985) were describing framing when they wrote that leaders concern themselves with the organization's basic purpose and general direction and with articulating these ideas to others. When used effectively, frames create understanding—the basis for action—and make collective behavior possible by enabling belief in one view to prevail over others (Fairhurst and Sarr, 1996).

Three styles are particularly useful in the enabling stage. The logical style helps leaders develop frames to explain a change. The inspirational style facilitates

the process of frame development by encouraging open discussion. The supportive style provides employees with a sense that they will find help adjusting to the new change.

LAUNCHING

This is the stage in which the change effort commences. To launch effectively, leaders need to meet specified launch goals, achieve early results to demonstrate the value of the plan, and assess progress along the way. While this definition of the launch stage does not preclude occasional reliance on the inspirational or supportive styles, the emphasis is on practical concerns of getting under way and achieving goals. These are better accomplished by the commanding or logical style pattern. The logical style helps in the explanation of specified launch goals and the commanding style encourages a determination to achieve them.

One of the chief obstacles in this stage is resistance to change. A natural inclination, when confronted with naysayers and critics, is to strike back. Max Depree warns that “leaders don’t inflict pain, they bear it.” DePree argues that too many leaders see disagreement as an indication of rebellion. They prefer to surround themselves with loyal “lieutenants” who do not threaten their leadership.

But what if resistance is reframed? What if dissent is interpreted by leaders as potentially important information? The likely response is less defensive. If leaders have truly thought through the changes they propose, then they can be confident and comfortable with dissension. According to James O’Toole, author of *Leading Change*, “To lead effectively is a matter of clear thinking on the part of the leader.

Leaders must be clear about their own beliefs, they must have thought through their assumptions about human nature, the role of the organization, the measurement of performance, and so on” (1996, p. 46). Essentially, if leaders have done their homework regarding proposed change, if they have logically thought through the pros and cons, as logicians do, then they will have the confidence to encourage contrary opinions and the wisdom to learn from them. Once they have entertained doubts and skeptics and responded effectively, their orientation can shift to directing people, in a nonauthoritarian manner, toward mutually defined goals.

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There are times when commands work extremely well. In an emergency somebody has to take charge. When tough budget decisions must be made or personnel problems call for quick action, the commanding style may be most appropriate. Leaders who use a commanding style are not necessarily bullies forcing their ideas upon others. They are, however, goal oriented and have a very good idea of how they want to reach it. Once the planning and enabling stages of change have been effectively conducted, the direction of change should be one that the leaders, with follower input, have worked together to define. At this point, someone or some group needs to point the way. This is when a results-oriented approach can be beneficial. It doesn’t require completely closing down avenues of input, but it does require focusing on moving along the defined path.

CATALYZING

During this stage people, not plans and practices, are the paramount focus. They are the ones who will make or break the change effort. To be effective, people must feel that their efforts count. The people-oriented styles of inspirational and supportive leaders become important at this stage. The other two styles may assist in the process. An occasional commanding push to meet goals or a logical leader's explanation for taking a certain route may prove useful, but the greater emphasis in this stage is on involving and energizing people.

The inspirational style encourages people to expend energy and invest time in the change effort. Linda Wachner, CEO of Warnaco, says, "The biggest obstacle to change we encounter is keeping

"The inspirational style encourages people to expend energy and invest time in the change effort."

peoples' energy up." She asks, "Once they're dreaming the dream and they see it in return on their own equity, how do you continue

keeping the energy up?" Her answer is to reward small successes along the way. She brings employees together to feel good about what they've done. It builds energy and momentum in people ("Leaders of Corporate Change," 1992).

Another organization noted for its emphasis on encouraging innovation is 3M. Employees spend as much as 15 percent of their work time on projects of their own choosing. Up to \$50,000 in grants is given to encourage inventions. William Molthight introduced the maxim at 3M that is still followed today: "Listen to anybody with

an idea and encourage experimentation and doodling—if you put fences around people, you wind up with sheep."

Supportive leader behavior can offset the negative effects of stressful situations. It can be especially beneficial when tasks are psychologically or physically distressing (House, 1995). Since most change efforts foster uncertainty and some degree of distress, especially after the initial excitement has worn off, leaders can encourage continued investment in change efforts by being attuned and responsive to the concerns of those who follow them. Mentoring, guiding, counseling, coaching, providing helpful feedback, and empowering workers can keep change on track.

Boeing discovered the benefit of giving people the authority to make changes. Their traditional method for designing aircraft in the early 1990s was "surprisingly primitive" (*Fortune*, 1993). First, engineers designed the plane's shape and components, the blueprints went to manufacturing experts who planned the production and final assembly, and finally, the manufacturing plan went to tooling specialists who designed specialized production machinery. The phases were all in sequence, causing them to take a long time. The three groups had little contact, so tooling specialists often received blueprints for parts that couldn't be manufactured or ones that were too expensive to produce.

Boeing changed their primitive methods by having engineers, manufacturers, and tooling experts operate concurrently and together rather than in sequence and independently. Equally important, they eliminated expensive redesign work by freeing the teams of bureaucracy. The changed philosophy: "When the group

decides to alter the design of a major part, it has the authority to make the changes itself, rather than waiting months for approvals from higher-ups" ("Can Boeing Reinvent Itself?" 1993, p. 18).

Edward Lawler, in his book *From The Ground Up* (1996), argues that the popular job enrichment approach to keeping people interested is limited. Enriching the jobs of toll collectors, telephone sales representatives, reservation agents and others where duties are tied to repetitive customer contact or to technology is a daunting task. Lawler suggests a "new logic" in which people become involved in a variety of team types. Problem-solving teams can work on identified challenges, work teams can be assigned the task of getting work done, project teams can be formed to manufacture a particular product or deliver a service, overlay teams coordinate groups and individual activities and management teams exist to manage other teams and individuals solving integration issues. This multiple team approach offers a place for everyone in assuring that project and organizational change goals are met and can be especially successful if the right types of teams are chosen for the job and organization.

Such involvement is a promising means of catalyzing change efforts. If people are to remain energized, they need to feel that they aren't swimming like salmon upstream, that their ideas are welcome, and that they will receive the assistance they need to make their work more productive and rewarding.

MAINTAINING

This often overlooked stage of the change process requires overseeing, guiding people to continue their efforts and

providing them with the motivation and assistance to do so. Here the style emphasis is once again on people. Persuasion becomes crucial.

Persuasion calls for an ability to listen well enough to know what matters to people. The ACE Model of Persuasion (Reardon, 1981; 1991) indicates that people are more likely to change if they see what's expected of them as *appropriate* given who they are and what they can do, *consistent* with their own self-image and goals, and *effective* in terms of bringing them the kinds of reward they value.

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The logical style is useful in identifying and reading the cues that enable leaders to communicate in ways that are relevant to people. If people don't see themselves as capable of stretching when the bar is raised, if they think it's inappropriate for them to do so or likely to lead to punishment rather than reward, they won't stretch. Leaders need to convince them that doing so is the appropriate, consistent, and effective thing to do.

According to Jack Welch, this means finding a way to engage the mind of every single employee. If you don't find a way to make every person feel more valuable, then you end up with wasted minds, uninvolved people, and a labor force that's angry or bored. Welch sees only one way to get more productivity from people: to get them involved ("Jack Welch's Lessons for Success," 1993). Persuasion is not something done to people but rather something done with them. So you have to

know what matters to them and use that, and a sense of ownership, to encourage their best work.

Change maintenance requires an ongoing emphasis on input and involvement. This is where the inspirational and supportive styles play a crucial role. If people feel that their ideas, once considered valuable, are being ignored, they will cease to take an interest in making change work. Often change is undermined by failure to

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involve people and assist them in maintaining it. According to leadership experts Ronald Heifetz and Donald Laurie (1997b), this may mean managing the rate of change, orienting people to

toward new roles and responsibilities, clarifying business realities and key values, and defining conflict as part of the process.

How VERSATILE CAN ONE LEADER BE?

Leaders who are versatile are identified as *strategic leaders*. They recognize the importance of people in the organization and concentrate on ways to challenge people and stretch their imaginations in forming and implementing strategies. They see visions as the product of ongoing conversations between them and the people who carry them out. They focus on and reward creativity and readily accept innovative solutions to problems.

They value proactive thinking, avoid "reacting" to situations, and reject autocratic rigidity. Yet, when the path has been determined and people are "on board," this same leader gives direction and looks for results.

This is a tall order for a single leader. Consider, for example, Pfeffer's description of leader sensitivity. Pfeffer (1992) considers leader power the ability to influence followers. This inevitably calls for being able to understand them. He explains that this sensitivity to people "does not mean that one is necessarily going to act in their interests, in a friendly fashion, or on their behalf," but it does mean "understanding who they are, their position on the issues, and how best to communicate with and influence them" (p. 172).

Pfeffer argues that sensitivity to others requires "an almost clinical interest in the observation of behavior...not only self-awareness, but more important, awareness of others" (p. 173). These skills are not taught in most schools. Those courses that do exist are cursed with the derogatory "touchy-feely" label by educators and practitioners focused on what they consider "the hard facts." So, how do leaders, trained in traditional ways, come to understand themselves and others?

Complicating the issue further is the findings of gender researchers indicating that men are less inclined than women to engage in the sensitivity Pfeffer describes (Kanter, 1993; Reardon, 1995; Rosener, 1990). In fact, our research using the LSI shows that female first-year MBA students are significantly more *supportive* in their leadership style than their male peers. By the time they graduate, however, these same women have shifted their style in favor of the logical

style more consistent with the MBA curriculum.

A similar challenge faces leaders who are not inspirational leaders by nature. How do leaders suddenly take on the mind-set and actions of someone whose manner of articulation encourages people to follow their lead? The inspirational style occurs more frequently than any other in the five-stage model of radical change. It's possible to stretch oneself, work on framing and delivering ideas to make them more relevant and attractive to people. But acquiring an inspirational style is not a simple overnight task.

We are left with the conclusion that perhaps few, if any, people are capable of being leaders of every stage in the change process. For those who insist on having their hand in every effort, this can be disconcerting news. But from another vantage point, not leading every stage relieves leaders of having to be all things to all people and gives them the opportunity to step back and observe and consider the change process. Here again, Pfeffer offers an important insight. Rather than consider power to be in the hands of one person in all situations, he proposes (1992, p. 78) that:

“An important source of power is the match between style, skill, and capabilities and what is required by the situation.” Referring to observations of 304 laboratory research professionals asked to describe the source of influence in their organization, “the principal finding was that the type of person who was influential depended on the nature of the project.” In technical service projects, with less task uncertainty, internal communication stars (those with many internal contacts) were most influential, while in applied research units, boundary spanners carried the most weight.”

As an example in the military context, it is instructive to consider the leadership style aspects prominently displayed by three famous World War II generals in the U.S. Army. Although each was a consummate leader and undoubtedly capable of fulfilling a variety of roles, they were placed in highly responsible positions in which their individual leadership styles proved especially effective. Gen. George S. Patton, Jr.,

was a brilliant tactician, a student of military history, and one of the Army’s most intellectual officers. His mission assignments often placed him in situations requiring a leadership style that could elicit immediate response to his tactical commands in the midst of grueling tank battles. Although some have argued that the intellectual in Patton might have preferred a “kinder, gentler” approach to motivating the desired results, there is no doubt that he was extremely successful as a commanding leader.

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By comparison, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower was responsible for organizing much of the Allied planning for the invasion of Europe and facilitating co-operation among diplomats and soldiers of many nations. He achieved great success by emphasizing his skills as an inspirational and supportive leader, even though he must have been sorely tempted at times to exercise directly his command authority and the commanding skills he so clearly exhibited during his rise to the top. Fortunately, Eisenhower recognized that persuasion

and team-building were the keys to success in his position.

A third soldier of great military and leadership skill was Gen. Omar N. Bradley. During a portion of the war effort, he found himself serving as a facilitator in support of Eisenhower, providing the logical explanations of policy matters and directives to other senior officers of U.S. and Allied forces. In that role, he persuaded by explaining the rationale for selected courses of action and was supportive of others as they expressed their concerns and reservations. General Bradley certainly

"The TARDEC and general examples indicate that leadership is seldom a one-person job."

inspire, but it is instructive to reflect on how he relied on his logical and supportive skills as one of Eisenhower's key facilitators.

For acquisition professionals a useful example of adjusting one's style to the demands of the task is the change effort launched by the U.S. Tank-Automotive Research Development and Engineering Center (TARDEC), the nation's laboratory for advanced military automotive technology. In their effort to achieve global technological superiority in military ground vehicles and providing affordable military systems and the most commercial competitive products, TARDEC's 1988 management team headed by Ken Oscar recognized that commitment and personal involvement would be fundamental. They would need to put customers first. They realized, however, that this would require

demonstrated in a variety of critical situations during the war his command skills and his personal ability to inspire,

commitment on the part of their employees (associates). To assure the buy-in of their people, they placed air conditioning in the main building (the number one complaint) even though rules and regulations indicated the arsenal was too far north and the number of cooling days too few (an anti-commanding style move). Substantial renovation of 13 buildings was accomplished, costing more than \$35 million. Innovation became a paramount feature in the TARDEC effort (inspirational orientation) as evidenced by a first-of-its-kind professional development program along with the establishment of TARDEC virtual university.

The phase approach to achieving their vision along with an openness to innovative ideas provided the foundation for the TARDEC change effort. It was only after they'd creatively established credibility with their own associates (aligning, enabling, and motivating) that TARDEC leaders were ready to launch their customer focus. They set up a marketing office to coordinate customer requirements, expectations, and feedback which goes to Center scientists and engineers. Their Fielded Vehicle Performance Data System (FVPDS) team of associates developed a sophisticated database which accesses 20 different vehicle logistics and performance tracking systems, enabling TARDEC to anticipate customer needs and provide quick responses (DoD, 1997).

The TARDEC and general examples indicate that leadership is seldom a one-person job. Of course, the buck has to stop somewhere, but in day-to-day change efforts, it's better to share responsibility and learn what needs to be done from the people who get it done. James O'Toole writes that "leaders fail when they have

an inappropriate attitude and philosophy about the relationship between themselves and their followers" (1996, p. 37). One of the most inappropriate attitudes is that the leader knows everything. O'Toole proposes that the best leaders always include people who are affected by change in the process of planning and making that change.

Awareness of one's leadership style is critical to being an effective leader of change. Although changing styles is difficult, awareness provides a basis for focusing on the style that best fits each stage of change. It helps leaders identify whether they are prepared to lead the entire change process or whether they might benefit from allowing others to do so with them.

Research shows that some groups do prefer certain style types. Comparing female and male MBAs was mentioned earlier. In another study, international MBA students scored higher on the supportive

style and lower on the commanding style than the typical executive MBA student from the United States. Asian and Irish MBA students score higher on supportive than comparable U.S. MBAs. A group of presidential fellows at the University of Southern California, who were chosen by their respective schools for their potential as future leaders, had significantly higher scores in both inspirational and supportive styles than the population as a whole.

To stretch their leadership styles, leaders need to be aware of their predispositions. The LSI provides that information. By linking the LSI with the Five-stage Radical Change Model, leaders can see where their own and their peoples' strengths and challenges lie. Knowing what you're best suited for and what might be more effectively led by others is critical to achieving success in today's environment of radical change.

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